Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 21739 261748Z

67
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 21739

E.O.11652 GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, FR, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEWS ON MILITARY MATTERS

REF: PARIS 21461; PARIS 21444

1. JACQUES ATTALI, UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICY AND ONE OF THE FOUR MEMBERS OF A PS DELEGATION WHICH VISITED MOSCOW 6-8 JULY (REFTELS), GAVE LABATT FOLLOWING COMMENTS AND IMPRESSIONS REGARDING SOVIET ATTITUDES ON MILITARY MATTERS:

(A) SOVIET OFFICIALS WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO PROFESS PEACEFUL INTENTIONS AND DISINTEREST IN "ANY GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION IN WESTERN EUROPE." THEY SPOKE WITH APPARENT SINCERITY ABOUT THE HORRORS OF WAR AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO PEACE. THEY MENTIONED THE GREAT AMOUNT OF WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE USSR TO "DEVELOP THE COUNTRY'S RESOURCES" AND IN GENERAL MADE EVERY EFFORT TO DRIVE ACROSS THE POINT THAT THE USSR HAS NO AGGRESSIVE INTENTIONS AND WAS COMMITTED TO DETENTE.
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PAGE 02 PARIS 21739 261748Z

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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(B) THE FOR KY LINE WAS EXPRESSED WITH PARTICULAR INSISTENCE BY PONOMAREV, WHO MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE FOR HOUR MEETING OF WHICH HALF WAS DEVOTED TO MILITARY MATTERS.

(C) TWO POINTS ABOUT THE MEETING WITH PONOMAREV STRUCK ESPECIALLY THE PS VISITORS AND WERE UNDERSCORED BY ATTALI. ONE WAS THE INTENSITY OF SOVIET OPPOSITION, AS EXPRESSED BY PONOMAREV, TO ANY ATTEMPT TO LOCATE PLUTON ATOMIC MISSILES IN FRG. PONOMAREV WAS SO INSISTENT ON THIS POINT AS TO CREATE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE USSR WAS PREPARED TO GO FAR TO PREVENT THE STATIONING OF PLUTONS ON GERMAN TERRITORY. ATTALI COULD NOT BE MORE SPECIFIC, BUT HE SEEMED EARNEST IN TRYING TO CONVEY THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH PONOMAREV SPOKE ABOUT PLUTONS.

(D) PONOMAREV AND OTHER SOVIET OFFICIALS SPOKE WITH OBVIOUS NOSTALGIA ABOUT DE GAULLE'S POLICIES TOWARDS THE SOVIETS AND BY IMPLICATION EXPRESSED MISGIVINGS ABOUT GISCARD'S ATTITUDES ON DEFENSE MATTERS. THERE WERE SEVERAL CRITICAL REFERENCES MADE TO GENERAL MERY'S STATEMENT ON FRENCH STRATEGY AND TACTICS.

(E) THE SECOND POINT WAS THE PROMPTNESS, VERGING ON RUDENESS, WITH WHICH PONOMAREV WOULD CHANGE THE SUBJECT EVERY TIME HIS VISITORS WOULD REMARK ON THE FACT THAT THERE WAS AN OBVIOUS CONFLICT BETWEEN THE PROFESSED PEACEFUL INTENTIONS AND THE IMPRESSIVE SOVIET MILITARY BUILDUP ALONG THE EAST-WEST BORDER. ATTALI FOUND THIS DISCONCERTING. ASKED IF THIS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE REPORT TO MITTERRAND, HE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY, ADDING THAT THIS WAS "A VERY IMPORTANT DETAIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE MITTERRAND OFTEN REFERS TO THE SOVIET MILITARY STRENGTH AT THE EAST-WEST BORDER AS A WORRISOME SITUATION."
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